

Jessica Somers, Resident of Terryville, Tunxis Community College

My name is Jessica Somers, I live in Terryville, CT. I am a member of 4Cs - Congress of CT Community Colleges, a union representing FT and PT faculty and staff across our 12 community colleges and Adjunct faculty at the University of Hartford. I am providing written testimony in support of *S.B. No. 1105 (RAISED) an act concerning the percentage of courses taught by part-time faculty at the regional community-technical colleges*

I have been an adjunct instructor of Photography in the Connecticut Community College system for 23 years. In the over 2 decades I have worked for the community colleges there has yet to be a single full-time job opening in the discipline I teach. In fact, there is only one full-time appointment in my discipline across the entire community college system despite there being a degree and certificate offered in this discipline. When inquiring whether there will be a full-time faculty position that I could transition into in the future I have always been told that there simply isn't enough money to add a new full-time position. My situation is not unusual, I am not an outlier. Adjunct faculty make up nearly 75% of faculty at the community colleges in Connecticut.

In a system that relies heavily on the labor of adjuncts, students are left without an important support system as they pursue their education. I spend countless volunteer hours guiding and advising students in their studies. Not only are these supposed to be the paid responsibilities of full-time faculty but I am limited in the support I can offer students. Adjunct faculty are usually only contracted for 3-8 hours per week and often hold supplemental employment which limits their availability to support students. Community colleges that rely on adjunct labor have lower retention rates and fewer students from these colleges transfer into 4-year programs.

The Connecticut Community Colleges are operating under exploitative labor practices by not hiring more full-time faculty. I have been doing the same job with the same title and the same responsibilities for 23 years. My level of commitment to my job and my students and my growing skill set that has come from years of experience lands me in the same place year after year. I am not given the opportunity to advance my career or gain job security and benefits. My entire career has been contingent despite my dedication to it. Adjunct faculty deserve the opportunity to move into full-time positions and our students deserve the quality experience and education our community colleges claim to offer.

Adjunct faculty dedicate their time and expertise to meet the mission of their colleges to the best of their ability under the given circumstances yet they are not given a way to advance their careers and move into full-time faculty positions. The path towards improvement begins with capping the percentage of courses taught by adjunct faculty at 25% rather than relying on 75% of courses being taught by adjuncts as it stands now.